

RECEIVED

Testimony on Bill 15, CD1, 2010, Honolulu City Council, April 21, 2010.

APR 21 6 37 AM '10

Aloha Chair and Members of the Council,

CITY CLERK
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Thank you for allowing me to testify on Bill 15, CD1, dealing with elimination of funding for the office of the Neighborhood Board Commission and other matters. I am testifying in opposition to this bill.

My wife, Ivonne Cardenas, and I have a small business, Makakilo.com, that has been contracted by the City and County of Honolulu to videotape as many as eight of the Neighborhood Boards as they meet throughout the year for the past several years. This has given us the opportunity to see the Neighborhood Board system in several iterations up close and personal and through the "Watchful Eye" of the camera. We have seen how this system has enabled the regular citizen to witness the process of governance and to partake in this process from the grass roots level more than any other system of government in the State of Hawaii.

We can see that elimination of the activities of the Neighborhood Commission Office will also mean elimination of this excellent Neighborhood Board system throughout the city and we feel this would be a great disservice to the citizens and residents of Honolulu.

This Board system allows the local residents to come together to hear and discuss plans for the local area in which they live or work. While not all residents can take the time to appear at each board meeting, a representative number of the residents do come to the meetings and voice the concerns of their neighbors regarding issues of import to all. Other residents view the meetings on O'lelo Public Television and are then able to voice their concerns to the Board members regarding these issues, as well. And, we have seen where an issue of major concern to a large number of local residents has resulted in large turnouts to these meetings; sometimes 200 or more concerned community residents will come to the meeting to voice their concerns. And, often, these matters are able to be settled by Board action (which we realize is only advisory) right there at the meeting!

Elimination of these Neighborhood Board proceedings would be an egregious detriment to the ability of local residents to voice their concerns about issues of great importance to them and would harm the magnificent democratic workings of the Neighborhood Board system here in Honolulu. We implore you, reject this bill; vote "NO" on Bill 15!

Thank you for your attention.

Aloha,

Bob Farrell, Ivonne Cardenas, 808-944-2017, 1722 Makiki Street, #601, Honolulu, HI 96822